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EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENTS IN ENGLAND

III

IN my last letter, published in the February 1899 number of the REVIEW, I gave an account of the two important movements which now very largely occupy the attention of the English educational world—the reorganization of Secondary Education and the reconstitution of the University of London. The Statutory Commission appointed by the Act of 1898 to frame regulations for the latter purpose has not yet reported, and, though the general sense of some of the proposed statutes has leaked out and they have all been laid privately before the Standing Committee of Convocation of the University of London, it would be unprofitable to discuss them until the Report of the Commission is officially published.

I turn, therefore, towards firmer ground, where we may advantageously consider accomplished facts. The great Bill has come and achieved the finality of an Act. I have called it great, for such it was in expectation; but in achievement, alas! it brings forcibly home to every liberal imagination the ancient satiric adage, *Parturit mons, nascitur ridiculus mus!* All educational England was filled with desire for thorough renovation and reform, and the strongest English Conservative government of modern times has been able to produce in response, after much enquiry, much thought, and no little labor and talk, only a

“microscopic measure” of *initiative* reform. Nevertheless, as the first effort to do battle—or rather, the first official permission to prepare a campaign against the veteran forces and time-honored strongholds of public school tradition, the new Board of Education Act is likely to achieve historic importance and more than historic interest. Therefore I make no apology for giving its provisions in full. Afterwards I will point out both what it does and what it does not do, and then—its only merit—what it makes possible to be done.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACT, 1899

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Establishment of Board of Education.
 2. Duties and powers of Board of Education.
 3. Inspection of secondary schools.
 4. Consultative Committee.
 5. Orders to be laid before Parliament.
 6. Staff, remuneration, and expenses.
 7. Style, seal, and proceedings of Board of Education.
 8. Power for President or Secretary to sit in Parliament.
 9. Extent, commencement, and short title.
- Schedule.

An Act to provide for the Establishment of a Board of Education for England and Wales, and for matters connected therewith.

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1.—(1) There shall be established a Board of Education charged with the superintendence of matters relating to education in England and Wales.

(2) The Board shall consist of a President, and of the Lord President of the Council (unless he is appointed President of the Board), Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, the First Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury, and the Chancellor of Her Majesty's Exchequer.

(3) The existing Vice-President of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education shall also be a member of the Board, but on the next vacancy in his office the office shall be abolished, and the enactments mentioned in the schedule to this Act shall be repealed.

(4) The President of the Board shall be appointed by Her Majesty, and shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure.

(5) The Board shall be deemed to be established on the appointment of the President thereof.

2.—(1) The Board of Education shall take the place of the Education Duties and Department (including the Department of Science and Art), powers of Board and all enactments and documents shall be construed accordingly.
of Education

(2) It shall be lawful for Her Majesty in Council, from time to time, by Order, to transfer to, or make exercisable by, the Board of Education any of the powers of the Charity Commissioners or of the Board of Agriculture in matters appearing to Her Majesty to relate to education, and the Order may make such provision as appears necessary for applying to the exercise of those powers by the Board of Education the enactments relating to the Charity Commissioners or to the Board of Agriculture.

Provided that any question as to whether an endowment or any part of an endowment is held for or ought to be applied to educational purposes shall be determined by the Charity Commissioners.

3.—(1) The Board of Education may by their officers, or, after taking Inspection of the advice of the Consultative Committee hereinafter mentioned, secondary by any University or other organization, inspect any school supplying secondary education and desiring to be so inspected, for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the teaching in the school and the nature of the provisions made for the teaching and health of the scholars, and may so inspect the school on such terms as may be fixed by the Board of Education with the consent of the Treasury: Provided that the inspection of schools established by scheme under the Welsh Intermediate Educational Act, 1899, shall, subject to regulations made by the Treasury under section nine of that Act, be conducted as heretofore by the Central Welsh Board for Intermediate Education, and that the said Board shall be recognized as the proper organization for the inspection of any such schools as may be desirous of inspection under this section.

(2) The Council of any county or county borough may out of any money applicable for the purposes of technical education pay or contribute to the expenses of inspecting under this section any school within their county or borough.

4.—It shall be lawful for Her Majesty in Council, by Order, to establish Consultative a Consultative Committee consisting, as to not less than two-thirds, of persons qualified to represent the views of Universities and other bodies interested in education, for the purpose of—
Committee.

(a) framing, with the approval of the Board of Education, regulations for a register of teachers, which shall be formed and kept in manner to be provided by Order in Council: Provided that the register so formed shall contain the names of the registered teachers arranged in

alphabetical order, with an entry in respect to each teacher showing the date of his registration, and giving a brief record of his qualifications and experience; and

- (b) advising the Board of Education on any matter referred to the committee by the Board.

5.—The draft of any Order proposed to be made under this Act shall be laid before each House of Parliament for not less than four weeks during which that House is sitting, before it is submitted to Her Majesty in Council.

Orders to be
laid before
Parliament.

6.—(1) The Board of Education may appoint such secretaries, officers, and servants as the Board may, with the sanction of the Treasury, determine.

Staff remuneration, and expenses.

(2) There shall be paid, out of moneys provided by Parliament, to the President of the Board, unless he holds another salaried office, such annual salary not exceeding two thousand pounds, and to the secretaries, officers, and servants of the Board such salaries or remuneration, as the Treasury may determine.

7.—(1) The Board of Education may sue and be sued and may for all purposes be described by that name.

Style, seal and
proceedings of
Board of
Education.

(2) The Board shall have an official seal, which shall be officially and judicially noticed, and that seal shall be authenticated by the signature of the President or some member of the Board, or of a Secretary, or of some person authorized by the President or some member of the Board to act on behalf of a secretary.

(3) Every document purporting to be an instrument issued by the Board of Education, and to be sealed with the seal of the Board, authenticated in manner provided by this Act, or to be signed by a secretary or any person authorized by the President or some member of the Board to act on behalf of a secretary, shall be received in evidence, and be deemed to be such an instrument without further proof, unless the contrary is shown.

(4) A certificate signed by the President or any member of the Board of Education that any instrument purporting to be made or issued by the President or some member of the Board is so made or issued shall be conclusive evidence of the fact.

8.—(1) The office of President of the Board of Education shall not render the person holding it incapable of being elected to, or of voting in, the Commons House of Parliament, and shall be deemed to be an office included in Schedule H. of the Representation of the People Act, 1867; in Schedule H. of the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act, 1868; in Schedule E. of the Representation of the People (Ireland) Act, 1868; and in Part I. of the Schedule of the Promissory Oaths Act, 1868.

(2) After the abolition of the office of the Vice-President of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, one of the secretaries of the Board of

Power for President or secretary to sit in Parliament.

Education shall not by reason of his office be incapable of being elected to or of voting in the Commons House of Parliament.

9.—(1) This Act shall not extend to Scotland or Ireland.

Extent com-
mencement
and short title.

(2) This Act shall come into operation on the first day of April one thousand nine hundred.

(3) This Act may be cited as the Board of Education Act, 1899.

SCHEDULE: ENACTMENTS REPEALED.

(1) The Education Department Act, 1856. The whole Act. (2) The Public Health Act, 1858. In section seven the words "the Vice-President of the Committee of the said Privy Council on Education being one of them."

On the 9th of last August this Bill received the royal assent in the House of Lords and, after the English manner, without the slightest excitement. Very probably only a few of those who sat round me in the strangers' gallery, and heard the mystical words "La reine le veult," and saw the quaint solemnity of the Clerk clenching this ancient formula with a stately bow to my Lords of the Commission, when this important measure passed with ninety-seven others on to the statute book—only a very few were schoolmasters, fewer still masters in the great public schools. And yet—I quote from a very able "special article" which appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* the same morning—this Bill, which "deals with the apparently dry and uninteresting creation of departmental machinery," is really a "charter of national education," as will appear when "once the fact is grasped that this machinery is merely created in order to give shape and form to certain principles of the most vital importance. . . . It represents the first successful attempt ever made in England to incorporate and knit together in one harmonious whole the disconnected parts that go to make up the sum total of English education. Hitherto education in England has been mainly the result of personal initiative, supplemented by sporadic efforts on the part of the State to introduce a little order here and there, and fill up the worst gaps and deficiencies with various brand-new materials that were not always in organic connection with the rest, or even with one another. Thus, when creating our present system of national elementary education, it

made no provision for linking it on to our secondary schools, and again, when it decided to encourage technical instruction, it did not attempt to coördinate the new work with that already being carried on by the School Boards. The object of the present measure is to do away with the friction and overlapping, and, above all, to introduce order and system into our secondary schools, and, in a less degree, into our technical education." This is a very fair and kindly statement of the case for the government, and, as an opening of the door to reform, the Act deserves all the credit it can get. Yet, instead of a mere permission for the initiation of reform, we might have had a grand and comprehensive constructive measure of actual and immediate reform. But the government did not unite with its exceptional numerical strength the rarer moral courage which would have enabled it to carry out the masterly recommendations of the late Royal Commission noted in my last letter. One cannot help feeling how feeble this Act is—how little it does in comparison with what it might have done. But that is our wonderful English system of tinkering, which, strangely enough, has politically carried us further than any other nation in the world, and may perhaps do the same in education also. But one conclusion is obvious. If tinkering can produce such noble results, what might not enlightened, comprehensive action have accomplished? But let us return to the *fait accompli*. Though our "much cry" has brought us but "little wool," let us see what this wool is worth.

We notice at the outset a great pedagogical blunder, *i. e.*, the division of education into primary, secondary, and technical. In the first place technical education really has a part in both primary and secondary education, and it is false pedagogy to give it a separate identity. The justification offered is, of course, that the English system of technical education was established as a separate entity, and has now acquired vested interests that would offer strenuous opposition to amalgamation with the primary and proposed secondary systems of which, rightly considered, it forms a section. The only hope of harmonious co-ordination lies, therefore, in the establishment of a

chief secretary, who will have authority over the three sub-secretaries and, we must hope, will coördinate their actions. But even this will not satisfy the demands of the conception that technical education is a department, and a department only, of the ideal primary and secondary education.

In the next place, no provision is made for the control of tertiary, or higher, education. This large and most important field of educational effort is still left to follow its own devices, the theory being, of course, that its organization is perfect and its methods beyond reproach—a contention which is calculated to make the “knowing ones” smile and the enthusiast sigh. A more probable explanation of the exemption of tertiary education from the purview of the Act is to be found in the enormous conservative influence of the older universities. Hence it is that the new Act lets tertiary education “severely alone.” “No doubt,” says the obviously inspired writer in the *Chronicle*, “as time goes on, these three great divisions will be further subdivided—primary into primary and higher primary, secondary into lower and higher . . . while a department might be added for the universities and the evening continuation schools respectively.” Alas! a “department for the universities”—the most important of the three divisions of the true pedagogic tripartition to become a department of the second division! Surely the glorious British spirit of tinkering could no further go; yet the suggestion is characteristic, seriously made, and certain of a large following, if brought into the field of practical politics.

But a still more gigantic blunder is to be found in the fact that the reconstruction and unification of the educational authorities to constitute the new Education Department have been entrusted to a Departmental Committee of the present Education Department, no member of which committee possesses any “direct and intimate” knowledge of secondary education! Technology, moreover, is only partially represented. That division of education, therefore, for whose especial benefit the Act was obtained, is not represented at all on the reconstructing Departmental Committee, and the section whose proper incorporation requires the

guiding spirit of a thoroughly sound pedagogic expert is only partially represented by a mere official of a department that has earned widespread condemnation for the false pedagogy of its past administration. The only hope lies in the appointment of a first-class pedagogic expert to the sub-secretariat of the secondary department and an equally good expert to the chief secretariat controlling the three departments. Two names are in men's minds—two men stand out in men's opinions. Will both, will either, be appointed? No one can tell. The posts are still unfilled.

Everything may come right, if only the Privy Council has the sense and liberality to place upon the Consultative Committee, for which the Act provides, expert representatives of every important form of education obtaining in England, and if the reconstructing Departmental Committee has the sense to abide by the recommendations of this representative body. Were such a man as Mr. Acland now in the Ministry and at the head of educational affairs, there would be little anxiety; but, as things stand, any absurdity, almost, is to be dreaded.

The registration of teachers will be a prime duty of the Consultative Committee, and here again the timidity of the present Act shows itself. Whereas a courageous policy would have at once differentiated teachers into primary, secondary, and tertiary, the Act provides only for a general alphabetical register, though—and it is in this permissive attitude that the timidity is revealed—it does not *forbid* a classified register, and one will, of course, be made in time.

Passing to the matter of Inspection, we come again upon the traces of timidity. This question of inspection is the root of the whole controversy. Given a strong, capable, inspired inspectorate, thorough reform would be only a question of time. But the Act proceeds at once to discount all strength, capacity, inspiration by making inspection optional. This means, of course, that the good school, which requires inspection less, will be inspected because its merit will yearn after official recognition, and the bad school, which needs inspection more, will remain uninspected because its defectiveness will shun the light of official criticism.

So much for what the Act does and does not do. As regards what it makes possible to be done, there can be no doubt that the following sanguine estimate is by no means illogical, if—and there's the rub!—if the administration of the Act falls into intelligent hands—the hands of men who have been trained in the modern science of pedagogy, not men who have merely acquired at Oxford and Cambridge an esoteric classical culture on a basis of method which is, pedagogically considered, utterly unsound. If it should fall into the hands of the latter, unless they themselves are taken captive by the growing power of the spirit of the new pedagogic science, the last state of English secondary education will be worse than the first. But let us listen to the prophet. “Rightly carried into effect, the provisions of this Charter of English Education should lead to a steady improvement in all grades and groups of education. A close classification of schools will bring out more plainly the aims of each. It will make our whole system of education intelligible. The state label on a school will be a protection against fraud and a guide to parents of the particular kind of education they may desire. Increased intelligibility will lead to increased interest, and will render all classes more willing to make further sacrifices to improve the efficiency or supply the deficiencies of education. These, again, will become more visible as the gradual classification of schools will enable us to make an educational map of each district and see at a glance where the supply is defective. It will also allow us to render more efficient that system of scholarships for the clever sons of poor parents and help them to rise to the top of the tree. The state today wants the best talent it can get, and is less than ever a respecter of persons. And, lastly, it will be understood in democratic England, as has long been understood in democratic Switzerland, that secondary education is one of the most valuable assets of the state, and we shall be willing to subsidize out of the national exchequer not only primary, but secondary education, to which we contribute at present about a fiftieth per head of Switzerland's outlay.” “There is much virtue in ‘if,’” and the whole weight of this sanguine forecast stands on the frail

pediment of the first four words—"Rightly carried into effect." Who is there who does not hope that sense and insight may obtain the upper hand? Who is there who, knowing and remembering the complacent ignorance of the average British intellect and the crass obstinacy of the average British government official, will not tremble lest the "little tin gods" of tradition and red tape should prevail and the mighty armies of thoughtful discontent go down before the insensate and irresistible inertia of the constitutional jack-in-office?

Here I have reached the limits of my allotted space and must draw rein. On the first of April, 1900, this act comes into operation, and probably in May the University of London will leave its historic habitation in Burlington Gardens to take up its abode in the buildings of the Imperial Institute at South Kensington, where it will have ample room for the great expansion of effort and enterprise which the new statutes are calculated to allow. By that time the machinery of the Secondary Education Act, now being set up, will, doubtless, be in a sufficiently advanced state to permit a nearer guess as to the probable results of its action, and the statutes of the University of London Commission will almost certainly be made public. Thereafter we may look for interesting developments and ample material for many letters on educational movements in England, for the two higher branches of English education will then, it is to be hoped, awake from the traditionary slumber of centuries of indiscriminating reverence and, under the touch of the inspector's wand and in the glare of his pedagogic search-light, enter upon a new life of liberal effort and practical, as opposed to merely academic, success.

WILLIAM K. HILL.